

On English and Chinese Movie Title Translation

LA TRADUCTION DES TITRES DES FILMS CHINOIS ET ANGLAIS

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Abstract: Movie is not only a popular form of entertainment but also an important medium in inter-cultural communication. More and more communication between Chinese and English movies goes with the globalization. As a result, movie translation has become more and more important, especially title translation. However, there are many problems in movie title translation. In the hope of improving the present situation, this paper makes a study on how to translate English and Chinese movie titles. With many title translations as examples, the paper analyzes the characteristics of movie titles and focus on the problems in Chinese and English movie title translation, and concludes that there are three main problems, the messy and low-quality situation, the argument between alienation and assimilation, and over-imitation to Hollywood blockbusters' translation modes. This paper analyzes the examples and tries to find the reasons for each problem. Finally, suggestions are given on how to solve the problems, that translators should consider the individuality and characteristics of the original movie and consult the cultural backgrounds to keep the informatic, aesthetic and commercial functions in balance. So that readers can get a general idea about the situation of movie title translation and pay enough attention to movie title translation, and to improve the situation.

Key words: movie title translation, alienation and assimilation, over-imitation

Résumé: Le cinéma est non seulement une forme artistique préférée des gens, mais aussi un média très important des échanges interculturels. Sous l'influence de la globalisation, les échanges internationaux de films deviennent de plus en plus fréquents, la traduction des films paraît alors de plus en plus importante, en particulier celle des titres des films. Mais il existe aujourd'hui beaucoup de problèmes dans le domaine de la traduction des titres des films. L'auteur a fait des recherches sur la traduction. En citant de nombreux exemples, on a analysé les caractéristiques des titres des films chinois et anglais, les problèmes qui existent dans la traduction dont les trois problèmes principaux : celui de la confusion et de la mauvaise qualité de la traduction ; celui du débat de l'assimilation et de la dissimulation ; celui de l'imitation excessive du modèle de la traduction des films hollywoodiens. On a aussi analysé selon ces exemples leurs origines. Enfin, on a donné quelques propositions pour résoudre ces problèmes, c'est-à-dire, les traducteurs doivent, pour maintenir l'équilibre des fonctions informatrice, esthétique et commerciale des titres traduits, trouver la meilleure traduction en tenant compte des caractéristiques individuelles des films et de la différence des circonstances culturelles chinoise et anglaise. Cet article a pour le but d'aider à mieux comprendre la situation actuelle de la traduction des titres des films, de susciter l'attention de sa traduction et d'élever la qualité de la traduction.

Mots-Clés: traduction des titres des films, assimilation et dissimulation, imitation excessive, fonctions informatrice, esthétique et commerciale

Movie has become a popular form of entertainment and more and more communication between Chinese and English movies goes with the globalization. As a result, movie translation has become more and more important, especially title translation. This paper focus on the problems in Chinese and English movie title translation, gives suggestions on how to solve this problems by analyzing the distinct characteristics of both Chinese and English movie titles and the reasons of the problems. On characteristics, the paper concludes the

characteristics of Chinese and English movie titles from three aspects, in terms of form, in terms of style and in terms of aesthete and thinking modes. On the problems, the paper concludes that there are three main problems, the messy and low-quality situation, the argument between alienation and assimilation, and over-imitation to Hollywood blockbusters' translation modes. And the paper analyzes reasons or facts for each problem. At the end, the paper gives suggestions on how to solve the problems, that translators should consider the

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individuality and characteristics of the original movie and consults the cultural backgrounds to keep the informatic, aesthetic and commercial functions in balance.

This paper intends to let the readers know the present situation of the Chinese and English movie title translation, and tries to give suggestions to movie title translators in the hope of improving the present situation, and believes that Chinese and English movie title translation will become better and better.

1. FEATURES OF CHINESE AND ENGLISH MOVIE TITLES

Due to the differences of culture and language between China and the west, the titles of each side differ in the following aspects.

1.1 In terms of form

As far as length is concerned, Chinese movie titles look short and brief, normally no more than seven words, such as 《暖》, 《英雄》, 《獨自等待》, 《秋菊打官司》, 《一個都不能少》, 《第一次親密接觸》. And most Chinese movie titles are four-word idioms or set phrases, such as 《藏龍臥虎》, 《霸王別姬》. Structure is carefully considered in Chinese movie titles. While for an English movie, the title is freer in both length, words use and structure, it can be as short as *Matrix*, *babe*, or *they*, but also can be as long as *The Englishman Who Went up A Hill But Came Down A Mountain*. And it can be an idiom or a word or even a question etc., such as *Far Away*, *they*, and *Who is Eating Gilbert Grape*.

Another difference is that Chinese movie titles are mostly verbs or verb phrases, while English movie titles are mostly nouns or noun phrases. That is to say, for Chinese movie titles, verbs or verb phrases are on the dominant position but nouns or noun phrases are used in a small number, for English movie titles, the situation is just opposite. The examples of each are in large numbers. As examples, 《我心飛翔》, 《十面埋伏》, 《秋菊打官司》, 《獨自等待》etc. and *Cold Mountain*, *Casablanca*, *Ghost*, *Million Dollar Baby* etc. can serve well. From 1928 to 2000, there are fifty of sixty-two Oscar Award movies use nouns or noun phrases as their titles.

An evident feature of English movies is that names are frequently used as their titles. *Thelma & Louise*, *Erin Brockovich*, *Jane Eyre*, *Madam Curie*, *Sabrina* are eloquent examples. Places are also used as titles of English movies, for example, *Casablanca*, *Brokeback Mountain*, and *Noting Hill*. On the contrary, Chinese movies seldom use names or places as titles. Because only the name of an important person can be used as a title of a movie, such as 《焦裕祿》, it is imaginable to

use a name of a nobody as a title of a movie, this also applies to places.

1.2 In terms of style

Chinese movies are directly towards the theme in brief and meaningful words, it is easy for the audience to get a general idea about what is about or what is going to happen in the story with just a look at the title, whereas English movies' titles are always just telling who, what, when, where or how, much information has been kept. In order to understand the movie's theme, the audiences have to watch the movie with their own eyes, for example, you can't guess what it is going to happen in *Ghost* if you don't watch it, but it is sure that you can guess more about 《倩女幽魂》. And also without a beforehand watching you can absolutely get the theme of 《再說一次我愛你》, but you can't in *A love Story*. Furthermore English movies' titles are always free in style, it can be as odd as *Seven*, but also can be as common as *A love Story*, but for Chinese movies, titles are always serious, such as 《天下無賊》, 《霸王別姬》, it is hard to find a movie with a strange title.

1.3 In terms of aesthetic and thinking modes

English movie titles look simple, casual. The freedom in length, structure, and language use reflects their aesthetic theory of simplicity. Chinese movie titles look symmetric, serious and delicate. Moreover, Chinese movie titles sounds musical with peculiar Chinese tones due to careful consideration of a movie title's audiometric effect. These features reflect the Chinese aesthete of symmetry and balance.

These differences above reflect the difference of philosophy thinking and the aesthete between China and the west world. According to Fu lei, westerners value analysis and details, they try to be as specific and perfect as possible in their writings. Accuracy and specificity are emphasized in western culture, and the westerners see from the angle of parts or factors. What the western thinking way of analyzing and valuing parts reflects in movies is that names, the main factor of storyline, are frequently used as titles. And the large use of name-titles is also the manifestation of individualism, the heart-rooted philosophy belief of the westerners. The belief emphasizes the rights and independence of individuals. Therefore, as a manifestation in movies, names of individuals are emphasized as the most considerable characteristic.

Fu lei also concluded that Chinese value synthesizing and inducing. As a matter of fact, Chinese usually hold things from the whole and general view. So Chinese movie titles are of generality, and direct towards the theme.

2. THE EXISTING PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH AND CHINESE MOVIE TITLES AND THE CAUSES OF THESE PROBLEMS

With the development of the communication in movies between China and the west, many problems emerge about the title translation.

2.1 The messy and low-quality situation

2.1.1 One movie with more translated titles

There are four Chinese titles for the American movie *Ghost*, 《幽靈》, 《鬼魂》, 《人鬼情未了》, 《第六感生死戀》. 《我知道你是誰》, 《有本事來抓我》, 《抓的就是你》, 《貓鼠遊戲》, 《神鬼交鋒》, 《逍遙法外》 are all translations of the movie *Catch me if you can*. This phenomenon never lacks examples. The audiences always get no idea that they all refer to one movie. Two causes contribute to this phenomenon. First, there are always different translations from the mainland of China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. For *Ghost*, 《幽靈》 and 《鬼魂》 come from the mainland of China, 《人鬼情未了》 from Hong Kong, 《第六感生死戀》 from Taiwan. For *Pretty Woman*, the mainland translation is 《漂亮女人》, Hong Kong version is 《麻雀變鳳凰》, Taiwan version is 《風月俏佳人》. *Once Upon a Time* is translated as 《美國往事》 in mainland China, 《義薄雲天》 in Hong Kong, 《四海兄弟》 in Taiwan, *The Thirty-nine Steps* is translated as 《三十九級臺階》 in mainland China, 《步步驚心》 in Hong Kong. The difference of translation from the three areas is the main reason of the messy phenomenon. Second, the media pay little attention to a standard or a same title. Newspapers, TV channels, journals ignore the use of different titles to the same film.

2.1.2 Low quality

Many movie titles are translated of low quality. Some titles are translated wrong and have nothing to do with the movie itself. For example, *American beauty* is translated as 《美國麗人》, or 《美國美人》. Judging from the translated title, people can hardly guess that the leading role of this movie is a common-looking middle-aged man, and that the story is about the moral danger in American family in the 1990s. The hero Lester Burnham works for an advertising company, but doesn't work well. His wife Carolyn, an agent of an estate company, doesn't run his business well either. The couple is in "mid-age danger period". Their daughter Jenny is at high school, being in the "youth danger period", she hates everything and rebellious to her parents. The relationships among them are worsening. Lester falls in love with one of his daughter's classmates, and has a sexual relationship with her; and he also takes drug with his neighbor's son,

and builds a homosexual relationship with him. His wife also has a relationship with her lover. Jenny is disappointed with her parents and plans to leave home with her boyfriend. At last, Lester feels both his life and his career were nothing success and shoots himself in blood. It is easy to find that 美國麗人 is not a proper translation. According to page 47 in *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, "American beauty: an American variety of rose, periodically bearing large crimson blossoms". With no doubt, American beauty is a metaphor, it should be translated as 《血紅玫瑰》 or 《殷紅玫瑰》. The main reason of this phenomenon is that the translators just translate from its literal meaning and totally ignore the theme and the content of the movies.

Besides, some translations go too far from the movie itself, for example, *The sun also rises*, a movie adapted from the novel with the same title by Hemingway, was translated as 《妾似朝陽又照君》. The main reason is that the translators are too careless about the theme of the movie. And also their translating skills are not good enough.

And some are even translated exaggeratingly to please the public. Strong words like "大" are frequently used, for example, *Honky Ton Freeway* is translated as 《高速公路大瘋狂》, *Violent Street* is translated as 《大破黑暗街》, *Cloud Dancer* is translated as 《雲霄大追殺》, *Outlaw Fosey Wales* is translated as 《逃亡大決鬥》. And violent words are frequently used in movie title translation to attract and excite the audiences, especially "血", for example, *The Soldiers* is translated as 《血爆群龍》, *Seed People* is translated as 《吸血天魔》, *The Brute Force* is translated as 《血濺虎頭門》, *The House Shadow* is translated as 《血宅狂凶》. And vulgar words are welcomed by some translators, *Things Are Tough All Over* is translated as 《糊塗寶貝上錯床》, *You Are a Big Boy Now* is translated as 《艷侶迷春》, *By Design* is translated as 《花俏彩鳳處處飛》. There are two factors contribute to these low-quality translations. One factor is the business benefit of booking office. Translators are trying to use shocking words to attract the public to watch. The other factor is the translators' attitude and skills, good translators holds serious attitude towards translation rather than runs after business benefit, they are good at translating skills to make good translations for movie titles. The above-mentioned low-quality translations were the product of the wrong attitude or poor translating skills of some translators.

2.2 Alienation and assimilation

Alienation and assimilation have served as two main approaches in movie title translation. There are many good translations in these two ways. *Waterloo Bridge* is translated as 《魂斷藍橋》, *The Bridge of Madison*

County translated as 《廊橋遺夢》, Bathing Beauty is translated as 《出水芙蓉》, Speed is translated as 《生死時速》, Forrest Gump is translated as 《阿甘正傳》, My Fair Lady is translated as 《窈窕淑女》, these are classical translations of domestication. 《紅樓夢》 is translated as The Story of the Stone, 《無極》 is translated as The Promise, 《我心飛翔》 is translated as Rainbow. Rain Man is translated as 《雨人》, Sleepless in Seattle is translated as 《西雅圖不眠夜》. These are classical translations of Alienation. However, there are still problems existing in alienation and assimilation.

2.2.1 Alienation and assimilation

When translating, which should be chosen has become a heatedly discussed question. Scholars both at home and abroad hold different ideas about this question. According to Venuti, domestication is following the target language's mainstream values to conservatively assimilate the source language in order to adapt to the native laws, publication trends and political needs (Venuti, 2001: 240). In his opinion, translation of the audiences' familiar language use covers the culture difference, kills the culture individuality, and makes the translation become the warm bed of culture invasion and colonization. Venuti defines alienation as a way from the native mainstream value but keep the distinction of the source language and culture (Venuti, 2001: 240). He suggested unfamiliar translation could catch and maintain the distinction of the source language and culture, and can strengthen the readers' realization of culture difference, and give them different reading experience so that it can exert the fixed function of original text better. His theory was followed by a great number of scholars at home, they strongly appeal for the dominant status of alienation. It seems that alienation has been the necessary trend in the future translation. But there are also scholars strongly opposite.

The main cause for the divergence is the different attitudes toward the different cultures. Movie concerns about cross-cultural communication. Venuti denies assimilation, the key reason is that he thinks that domestication is the warm bed of culture invasion and colonization, and those who think oppositely will certainly not agree with him. Another cause for the divergence is the different attitudes towards the audiences' understanding about the movies. Some translators think that assimilation helps the audiences to understand the foreign movies, while others think that with the development of international communication, many western cultural things have been brought to China, many audiences are eagerly to watch something more western, so it's good to translate by alienation.

2.2.2 Cultural background difference between alienation and assimilation

Due to the culture difference between China and the west, there are many difficulties in alienation and

assimilation. Many translators are not familiar with the English culture or don't pay much attention to the culture difference between China and the west, it's hard for them to alienate or assimilate the source movie titles well. For example, the American movie *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* was alienated as 《飛越杜鵑窩》 in Taiwan. Because the translator didn't consider the culture difference, in English, Cuckoo extendedly means the mad, and Cuckoo's Nest extendedly means the madhouse, while in Chinese, “杜鵑” symbolizes loyalty, “杜鵑窩” has no special meaning but the nestle of the birds. Another example, Hong Kong movie 《大話西遊之一：月光寶盒》 was alienated as *Chinese Odyssey 1: Pandora's Box*, the monkey king Sun Wukong was regarded as Odyssey of China, but Sun Wukong has not much in common with Odyssey of their experience. What's more worse, Pandora's Box symbolizes diseases, wars and all kinds of disasters, “月光寶盒” is a magic box which can pass through the time tunnel, these two box has nothing in common at all. Obviously, the translator knew little about Odyssey and Pandora's Box so as to make the mistake.

2.2.3 Over- assimilation

In movie title translation, over- assimilation is a common phenomenon. Take the famous American movie *Gone with The Wind* as an example, it is translated as 《亂世佳人》, it is a typical example of over- assimilation. At the beginning of the movie, the prologue says “There was land of Cavaliers and/ Cotton Fields called the old south.../ look for it only books, for it is/ No more than a dream remembered/ a civilization gone with the wind...”, as a matter of fact, the theme of the movie is that the southern culture has gone with the Civil War, and also, the heroine, Scarlet, has also lost her love, all seems has gone with the wind. 亂世佳人 means a beauty in a no peaceful world, it is just translated from the angle of the Chinese audiences' taste rather than from the original meaning of *gone with the wind*, the title itself. Moreover, “亂世佳人” imitate the style of “才子，佳人...”, the traditional Chinese love style, specifically, it carries on the style of the Yuanyang Hudie Groups in old Shanghai before the revolution in China. It did pass on some information of the movie and carter to Chinese audiences' taste, but go against the purpose and aesthete meaning of the original title. However, the audiences, even some scholars, popularly accept this translation. And many translations followed its step, such as *White Sister* is translated as 《空門遺恨》, *Lady Hamilton* is translated as 《忠魂鵲血離恨天》, *You Can't Take It with You* is translated as 《浮生若夢》, *Deeds Goes to Town* is translated as 《富貴浮雲》, *The Story of Louis Pasteur* is translated as 《萬事流芳》, *Lucky Lady* is translated as 《風雲龍虎鳳》, *The Devine Lady* is translated as 《薄命花》, and etc. The main cause of over- assimilation is the business benefit of booking office. Another is that almost all the translators like to imitate to each other.

2.3 Over- imitation to Hollywood blockbusters' translation modes

Because of the fierce competition in movie market, some translators use the Hollywood blockbusters' translation modes to stir up the audiences' curiosity and purchase desire so as to tie up the similar movies to sell them out. For example, after *Total Recall* (acted by Arnold Schwarzenegger in 1990) won its popularity, all of Arnold Schwarzenegger's movies are translated in *Total Recall's* modes. Imitating *Total Recall's* translation 《魔鬼總動員》, *Raw Deal* is translated as 《魔鬼殺陣》, *Kindergarten Cop* is translated as 《魔鬼孩子王》, *True Lie* is translated as 《魔鬼大帝》. And also, many movies follow the “總動員” mode, *Finding Nemo* is translated as 《海底總動員》, *Toy Story* is translated as 《玩具總動員》, *The Long Kiss Goodnight* is translated as 《奪命總動員》, *Outbreak* is translated as 《危機總動員》. Following the mode of *Farewell, my Arms*, 《霸王別姬》 is translated as *Farewell, my concubine*. Similarly, “....俏佳人”, “....戰警” are popular modes to be frequently used. Regardless of the aesthetic meaning and the individuality of the original titles, these translations are mechanical imitation of low quality.

3 SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO TRANSLATE MOVIE TITLES

3.1 Consult the cultural backgrounds

“Translating a language is translating a culture.”(《中國翻譯》, 2001, January) Due to the culture difference between China and the west, many difficulties exist in translating. Therefore, it is necessary to consult the cultural backgrounds when translating. Movie titles draw materials mostly from the stories, backgrounds or leading roles, though brief but meaningful. Some titles originated from allusions, it is hard for the translators to hold the implications. Moreover, movies carry rich culture information, mirror the utterly different nature environment, religions and histories. Therefore without consulting the cultural backgrounds and repeated deliberation, translators can never find good translations.

For example, if you don't know that “Top Gun” is the code of the fighter training school of U.S. F-14 naval force, you are possibly to translate it as 《絕頂的槍》. As a matter of fact, the movie praises the spirit of the school, valuing the power of will. So 壯志凌雲 can express the original title's deep content. 《龍年警官》, 《沒事偷著樂》 mirror Chinese culture, it's hard to transform to English, with considering about the culture information and the content, we can translate them as Police Office

in 1998, *A Tree in The House*.

《魂斷藍橋》 is a masterpiece of movie title translation. The translator had considered about the cultural backgrounds of both sides. Waterloo associates with the battle in Belgium, in which Napoleon lost. But in the movie, Waterloo Bridge is in London, England, where the hero and the heroine met, and at last, the heroine walked right towards the running train to kill herself there. If the translator translated it as 滑鐵盧橋, the audience will certainly think the movie is about Napoleon. Moreover, there is an old allusion of “藍橋” in Chinese, it is said that there is a fairy cave at “藍橋”, in which Pei Hang, a man of Tang dynasty, met with a fairy named Yunying (《太平廣記》, vol.50), 藍橋 just match the bridge. Since it is a tragedy, and the heroine committed a suicide, 魂斷 is added before 藍橋, which makes the title more gloomy and Chinese. Waterloo Bridge is just the place of the story, but “魂斷藍橋” is not just the place but even implicates the story, it is a typical form of Chinese movie titles. 《魂斷藍橋》 is an excellent model of consulting the cultural backgrounds.

3.2 According to the individuality and characteristics of the original movie

Alienation and assimilation, literal, liberal and adaptation are all good ways for translating movie titles, we can find good translations for each of them. So we can't say that we should take which way as the leading method. A movie has its own individuality and characteristics, we should find the most suitable way for it. For example, *Mrs. Doubtfire* is a comedy, it tells about the hero Denier disguised himself as an old lady and named himself Mrs. Doubtfire to be the house governor to stay with his children after the divorce with his wife, the movie is amusing. So it is translated as 《肥媽先生》 by the liberal way to show its comedic effect, while the other ways are no better than this. Take *Three Smart Girls* as another example, the story is about how the three girls managed to make their parents love each other again. By alienation, we can translate it as 《三個聰明女孩的故事》, by literal translation, we can translate it as 《三個聰明伶俐的女孩》, but both two translations look common in Chinese, so how to make it look extraordinary is the key problem in translating. “滿庭芳” is a classical ancient Chinese poem phrase, “滿庭蘭玉” means a family has excellent children in Chinese, therefore assimilation is no more suitable here. *Shallow Hal* is another example, its Chinese translation is 情人眼裏出西施. This story tells a man loves a fat lady named Shallow Hal whom no other man would love, it just uses the famous Chinese idiom 情人眼裏出西施, so the translation is neither literal, liberal nor alienation, but adaptation and assimilation. *Seven* is a horror movie about the seven sins in Bible, because of this specialty, Chinese audiences may not understand

the meaning if we just translate it in the literal and the alienation way. In short, we should find the most suitable way to translate the titles by considering about the movies' characteristics and individualities.

3.3 Keep the informative, aesthetic and commercial functions in balance

Movie is a special form of entertainment, when we are translating we have to consider all of its functions. To the audience, movie titles must be attractive and exciting, to the movie business runners, movie titles must be beneficial, and for the movies themselves, as a form of art, the titles must be aesthetic. The three functions are not contradictory at all, but it's hard to balance them when translating. Now many movies are translated commercially but in low aesthetic and informative functions. Such as *The Sun Also Rises*, it is translated as 《妾似朝陽又照君》, *Seed People* is translated as 《吸血天魔》, *The Soldiers* is translated as 《血爆群龍》, *You Are A Big Boy Now* is translated as 《艷侶迷春》, and etc. And some are informative but less commercial and aesthetic, for example, *Gone with the Wind* is translated as 《飄》, it is too literal and has little aesthetic function, and the American thriller *When The Bough Breaks* is translated as 《當樹枝折斷時》, many audiences thought it as a science teaching movie, and then had no desire to watch. As good examples, *Bathing Beauty* is translated as 《出水芙蓉》, it uses the classical Chinese idiom 出水芙蓉, which performs high aesthetic function and is familiar and attractive to Chinese audience, also, it accurately passes the information of *Bathing Beauty*. *The Wizard of Oz* is another masterpiece of movie title translation. Oz means fairyland, 《綠野仙蹤》 is the title of the novel written by Li Baichuan in Qing dynasty, the novel is about the customs by telling the story of fairies. So 《綠野仙蹤》 is appropriate for *The Wizard of Oz*. Other examples such as, *Love Me Tender* is translated as 《鐵漢柔情》, *Waterloo Bridge* is translated as 《魂斷藍橋》, *The Bridge of Madison County* is translated as 《廊橋遺夢》, *Swim Fan* is translated as 《泳池的誘惑》, *A Glean of Hope* is translated as 《一線生機》, *Speed* is translated as 《生死時速》, these translations are attractive to the audience, and loyal to the original titles and in high aesthetic taste.

However, it is never easy to keep the three functions in balance. To achieve this goal, a translator must accomplish the following three aspects. Firstly, it requires excellent movie aesthetic appreciation ability. Translators are special audience, they are not only watching the movies but also perceiving, understanding, imaging, transferring their emotions and trying to recreate. Movie aesthetic appreciation contains the appreciation culture and art features of a movie. This is the pre-condition of accurate translation. Secondly, it requires good literature accomplishment. "as a part of literature translation, movie translation require the translators to have certain knowledge of both Chinese and foreign languages" (錢紹昌, 2000). Only with good literature accomplishment, translators can represent the original title's charm and meaning. Thirdly, it requires right attitude for translation. Translators have to be responsible for both the movie art and the audience, neither can they translate carelessly nor only run for business benefit. Such as *The Sun Also Rises*, the translation is too careless and only run for business benefit.

CONCLUSION

English and Chinese movie title translation is the transformation between the two cultures. To have excellent translations, we must know the distinct characteristics of both Chinese and English movie titles. The paper concludes that Chinese movie titles looks symmetric, serious, delicate, short and brief, normally no more than seven words, and most Chinese movie titles are four-word idioms or set phrases, while English movie titles are freer in length, words use and structure. Chinese movie titles are mostly verbs or verb phrases, while English movie titles are mostly nouns or noun phrases. English movies frequently use names as their titles, while Chinese movies don't. Many problems emerge about the title translation at present, mainly about the messy and low-quality situation, the argument between alienation and assimilation, and over-imitation to Hollywood blockbusters' translation modes. This paper concludes that translators should keep the characteristics of the original movies and consult the cultural backgrounds to keep the informative, aesthetic and commercial functions in balance.

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